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Gender and Apologies: Exploring Offended Females’ Perceptions of
Apologies from Males and Females

Stacey Bennet


A report submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of
Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) Honours,
Faculty of Computing, Health, and Science,
Edith Cowan University,
Submitted October 2008

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The Influence of the Gender of an Offender on Apologies:

A Literature Review

Stacey Bennet

**A Report Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of Bachelor of Arts Honours,**

Faculty of Computing, Health and Science,

Edith Cowan University

August 2008

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Abstract

The construct of apology has recently received more attention by researchers (Allan, 2007) and several factors that may influence apologetic responses have been identified. The gender of an offender is one such factor. A review was undertaken to examine the literature pertaining to the influence of the gender of an offender on apologies. As a result of the review, several themes were identified. These included gender differences and similarities in the frequency of apologies, the quantity and complexity of components, and the actual content of those components. Furthermore, contextual factors that may play a role in the influence of gender emerged as a theme, such as the status of the recipient of the apology, the type and closeness of the relationship, and the degree of face threat to the offender. Together with methodological considerations, these contextual factors were seen to partially account for the mixed findings pertaining to gender differences in the literature. Specifically, the methods employed in the research so far have been limited to certain situations and to hypothetical responses which may impact on the influence of gender on apologies. Recommendations were made for future research to explore the influence of gender on apologies for more severe offences in intimate relationships. Such information would perhaps be more beneficial to clinicians.

Author: Stacey Bennet

Supervisors: Dr. Dianne McKillop

Prof. Alfred Allan

Submitted: August 2008

The Influence of the Gender of an Offender on Apologies: A Literature Review

The construct of apology is seen as an important area of research (Allan, 2007; Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008) due to the role that apologies may play in repairing relationships (Bono, McCullough, & Root, 2008; Takaku, 2001) and enhancing psychological (Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004) and physical (Anderson, Linden, & Habra, 2006) wellbeing after conflict (Eaton, Struthers, Shomrony, & Santelli, 2007). However, apologies are complex (Lazare, 2004). Consequently, there are many factors that may influence apologetic responses, and several have been identified for future research. These include the need for a comprehensive theory of apology to facilitate a more consistent approach to the empirical investigation of apologies (Allan, Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006); further investigation of contextual factors such as offence (Gonzales, Pederson, Manning, & Wetter, 1990) and cultural characteristics (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008); and finally, further investigation of the characteristics of the apologizer such as status (Tata, 1998, 2000) and gender (Lazare, 2004; Slocum, 2006; Smith, 2008).

In particular, gender is a widely recognized factor in understanding many aspects of behaviour (Stewart & McDermott, 2004), and indeed the influence of gender on apologies has received attention from researchers. However, because findings related to the influence of gender on apologies, and also in related areas such as communication have been mixed, the extent of influence is unknown. The purpose of this review is to examine the literature pertaining to the influence of the gender of the offender on apologies in an interpersonal context. The construct of apology is defined in broad terms in this review, due to the fact that researchers have used varied definitions. Therefore, apology will be defined using Slocum's (2006) theory of apology, where an apology is a form of restorative behaviour, and is seen in terms of the three core components of affirmation, affect, and action.

In order to extensively search the literature, broad search terms were included such as ‘apology’, ‘gender’, ‘sex’, ‘account’, and ‘communication’ using the psychological databases PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycINFO, Proquest, Social Sciences Citation Index, SAGE journals, Academic OneFile and Wiley InterScience Journals. The search revealed five major themes pertaining to the influence of an offender’s gender on apologies. These themes will be examined in this review. It is noted that the themes presented are not an exhaustive list, but rather are representative of the most relevant areas that have received the most theoretical and empirical attention in the literature. These themes include the influence of gender on three main facets of apologetic responses: the frequency of apologies, the quantity and complexity of apology components, and the content of apology components. In addition, contextual factors that may play a role in the influence of gender emerged as a theme. Of these contextual factors, cultural factors appeared to play a larger role and therefore are discussed as a separate theme. Finally, methodological issues that may have impacted on the examination of gender also emerged as an important factor. Examples of these issues will be discussed following the aforementioned themes.

Frequency of Apology

Researchers and theorists in the psychological (Gonzales et al., 1990) and sociolinguistic fields (e.g., Fraser, 1981; Holmes, 1989; Tannen, 1990) have been interested in differences in the frequency of apologies offered by males and females. Within the literature, theorists note that the common assumption appears to be that females are more likely than males to offer an apology (Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008). The work of linguist Tannen (1990) provides an important example because her work is often cited in theory and research pertaining to gender differences in communication (Edwards & Hamilton, 2004). Specifically, Tannen proposed that females apologize

more often than males, and based this argument on anecdotal evidence from personal observation and linguistic analyses of a small sample. As a result of these qualitative methods, the validity of this assertion is questioned by other empirical researchers (Edwards & Hamilton, 2004; MacGeorge, Graves, Feng, & Gillihan, 2004).

An ethnographic study by linguist Holmes (1989) does provide additional support for Tannen's (1990) claims. This study was based on 183 naturally occurring apologies in a sample of adults in New Zealand. Participants were observed in a variety of settings after having committed various offences (e.g., inconveniencing a friend, accidentally making contact with a stranger) and subsequently the author measured the frequencies of apologies by males and females. Similar to Tannen, Holmes found that compared to males, females were more likely to offer an apology, with females offering 75% of apologies.

Empirical research has also found similar gender differences in the frequency of apologies. Much of this research has come from account theorists, who define accounts as remedial verbal strategies that offenders employ after committing an offence (Schonbach, 1980). In this approach, apologies are seen as concessions which acknowledge responsibility for the offence and offence consequences, as opposed to excuses, justifications, and refusals which do not accept responsibility (Itoi, Ohbuchi, & Fukuno, 1996). In addition, apologies and excuses are seen as mitigating accounts, and justifications and refusals are seen as aggravating accounts (Gonzales et al., 1990).

Several studies within the account literature (Gonzales et al., 1990; Hodgins & Liebskind, 2003; Hodgins, Liebskind, & Schwartz, 1996) provide empirical support for the assertions of Holmes (1989) and Tannen (1990). For example, Gonzales and colleagues found that females were more likely than males to offer mitigating accounts after being induced to believe that they were responsible for liquid spilling onto a confederate's bag and possessions. Furthermore, of those mitigating accounts, males

were more likely to use excuses, whereas females were more likely to use apologies.

Females also offered more apologies relative to males in later studies by Hodgins and colleagues.

In contrast, linguist Fraser (1981) found that males and females did not differ in the frequency of apologies in a study based on personal observations. However, because Fraser did not outline his method it is difficult to assess these findings. Blackman and Stubbs (2001) do provide support with an empirical study. The authors found no gender differences in the frequencies of apologies offered by participants after they were induced to make contact with a male confederate causing him to spill his papers. In this study, gender did not exert an influence on the participants' responses to the incident, with males and females equally likely to offer an apology, excuse, or no response. Partial explanation for the differing results in the studies examining frequencies of apology may rest with methodological issues, however for the purposes of clarity these will be discussed as a whole at a later stage in the review.

The Quantity and Complexity of Components of an Apology

Apology theorists and researchers have also been concerned with gender differences in the effort expended in apologizing. Effort has been measured by the length and complexity of the components in apologies (Gonzales et al., 1990; Hodgins et al., 2003), with components referring to the elements that comprise an apology (Gonzales, Manning, & Haugen, 1992; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989; Schlenker & Darby, 1981; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Forster, & Montada, 2004). Examples of components include those outlined by Slocum (2006) as affirmation (e.g., admitting responsibility), affect (e.g., statements of emotions) and action components (e.g., offering compensation).

As Gonzales and colleagues (1992) explain, researchers can measure the length of apologies by the quantity of components, and measure the complexity by the use of different components in combination. Researchers argue that it takes more effort to use longer apologies that are comprised of different components as opposed to the same component repeatedly used. Therefore, the length and complexity of apologies are seen as evidence for the degree of effort used to apologize (Gonzales et al., 1992; Tata, 1998, 2000). For example, repeatedly saying “I’m sorry” requires less effort than combining different components such as “I’m sorry. I admit what I did was wrong. I feel very bad about it and would like to make it up to you.”

Gender has been identified as an influential factor on the amount of effort exerted to apologize in several studies (Gonzales et al., 1992; Hodgins & Liebskind, 2003; Hodgins et al., 1996). For example, in a study that asked the 45 male and 45 female participants to provide written accounts after an imaginary offence, Gonzales and colleagues found that females offered apologies with more components than males. In addition, females also offered apologies that contained varied components, whereas males were more likely to use one type of component. Consequently, the authors suggested that females exerted more effort in apologizing. This study received support in later studies by Hodgins and colleagues which used similar methods, where females also offered longer, more complex apologies. However, Schlenker and Darby (1981) found contrasting results in a study that also explored gender differences in terms of the components of apologies. The 60 male and 60 female participants were asked to imagine bumping into an individual in a crowded place and to indicate their response. Males and females did not differ in the quantity of components, or the complexity of those components.

The Content of Components of Apology

The following discussion will focus on the content of components in apologies using Slocum's theory of apology as a guiding structure due to its similarity to the conceptualizations of apology by other researchers (e.g., Eaton & Struthers, 2006; Zechmeister et al., 2004) and theorists (e.g., Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008). As mentioned previously, in this model apologies consist of affirmation, affect, and action components, and these components will be discussed separately.

Affirmation Component

Affirmation refers to the verbal admission and acknowledgement of responsibility for the offence (Slocum, 2006) and has been theorized as a central aspect of an apology (Lazare, 2004; Robbenolt, 2003). In relation to gender, Tannen (1990) theorized that females include more verbal statements of admission and acknowledgement which is in accordance with the cultural stereotype that males may be less willing to admit fault. Empirical studies have found some support for this notion. For instance, Gonzales and colleagues (1992) found that females offered more verbal statements of responsibility for the offence than males when apologizing. Furthermore, the authors manipulated the level of responsibility and found that females offered more statements of admission or acknowledgement of fault as responsibility increased. In contrast, males were less likely to include statements of admission or acknowledgement as responsibility increased; rather, males employed more refusals, which deny personal responsibility for the offence.

Similarly, in a study by Bataineh and Bataineh (2005), in which researchers asked the 50 male and 50 female participants to imagine committing a minor offence against a friend, females offered more statements of admission and acknowledgement in comparison to males who offered more refusals. Although the results in this study did

reach statistical significance, the differences were minor. This may suggest that gender differences in verbal admission or acknowledgement do exist, but that gender does not exert a strong influence over the use of this component.

The data from Holmes' (1989) study supports the view that gender does not exert a strong influence. Within the naturally occurring apologies, as discussed previously, females were more likely to apologize; however, there were no gender differences in the statements of admission or acknowledgement of responsibility. Therefore, it appears that if gender does exert an influence on the nature of the affirmation component, as in the Gonzales et al. (1992) study, it may be to a minor degree.

Affect Component

The affective component of apologies refers to the verbal expression and nonverbal demonstration of emotions such as regret, shame, remorse, sorrow, and guilt (Konstam, Chernoff, & Deveney, 2001; Slocum, 2006). Theorists and researchers view this component as an essential element of apologies (Anderson et al., 2006; Bennet & Earwalker, 1994; Fitness, 2001; Hareli & Eiskovitz, 2006; Lazare, 2004; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachel, 1997). Although there appears to be a lack of studies that specifically address the influence of gender on this component, there is a large body of research in the related area of communication and social interaction which is pertinent. Therefore, this discussion will outline such research, as well as specific apology research.

Verbal expression. The influence of gender on the verbal expression of affect appears to be significant, with many researchers and theorists citing findings in this area as robust (Birditt & Fingerman, 2003; Goldschmidt & Weller, 2000; Shibley-Hyde, 2006; Sprecher & Sedikides, 1993). Specifically, females and males have been found to

differ in their preferred communication style (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Dindia & Allen, 1992) with females preferring an affective and elaborate style and males preferring a more instrumental and direct style (Mulac, Bradac, & Gibbons, 2006). As such, females are seen to express more emotion, and to express emotion in different ways to males (Guerrero, Jones, & Boburka, 2006; Lerner, 2006). Importantly, gender differences in affective expression have been found in a variety of relevant contexts to apology, such as in conflict situations with a distressed friend (Michaud & Warner, 1997) and in offering social support to a distressed friend (Goldsmith & Dun, 1997). Females have also been found to be more likely to mention specific emotions after committing offences such as feelings of guilt (Williams & Bybee, 1994).

In relation to the influence of gender on affective expression in apologies, females offered more affective statements in a study by Gonzales and colleagues (1990). For example, females were more likely to verbalize affective statements, such as “I feel bad” and “I’m so embarrassed” (p. 617). The difference between males and females was substantial, with females being seven times more likely to offer affective statements.

In a more recent study by Bataineh and Bataineh (2005), females were also more likely to offer affective statements. Although males and females both included affective statements in their apologies, gender influenced the number and variety of affective statements. Specifically, females were more likely to emphasize affective statements through the use of intensifiers such as ‘so’ and ‘very’ and to use a wider variety of such statements. In contrast, males were less likely to use varying affective statements.

Nonverbal demonstration. Nonverbal cues in social interactions have been identified as an integral aspect of communication in general (Manusov & Trees, 2002; Trees & Manusov, 1998) and in relation to apologies specifically (Blackman & Stubbs, 2001; Gonzales et al., 1990; Kelley & Waldron, 2005; Ohbuchi & Sato, 1994; Slocum,

2006). As Anderson et al. (2006) note, key emotions in apologies such as guilt, shame, and sorrow, are often demonstrated rather than verbalized, through nonverbal cues such as facial expression, body posture, crying, eye contact, and tone of voice.

In relation to the influence of gender on the use of nonverbal gestures, much research in communication and social interaction has focused on differences between males and females (Guerrero et al., 2006; Hall, 2006). As with verbal expression of emotion, females have also been found to use more nonverbal cues in demonstrating emotion, with gender theorists such as Shibley-Hyde (2005) citing this difference as robust in a review of the literature on gender differences in communication.

Specifically, females have been found to be more sensitive to nonverbal cues (Hall, 2006), suggesting that females are more able to interpret and use cues effectively in social interactions. In addition, females may also be more likely to employ affiliative and affective nonverbal cues such as increased eye contact, crying, smiles, and gestures which not only connote emotion but also active listening (Guerrero et al., 2006).

The affective and affiliative cues mentioned above may be of relevance to apologetic situations, as females may not only be more likely to display more emotion, but may also demonstrate that the offended individual is important through showing that they are actively listening to the offended. Such a response from the apologizer has been theorized as essential in reaffirming the importance of the offended to the apologizer (Lazare, 2004; Slocum, 2006; Smith, 2008).

The research on apologies and nonverbal demonstration of affect is limited, and as a result, there is also a lack of research on the influence of gender on this aspect of apologies. This is possibly due to the difficulty in the measurement and definition of nonverbal cues. The results of a study by Gonzales et al. (1990) that did measure nonverbal gestures do not provide support for the gender differences found in the communication and social interaction literature mentioned above. In this study the

demonstration of remorse and embarrassment was defined by participants' nonverbal cues such as covering the face, pacing back and forth, looking at the floor, and smiling at the researcher. Males and females did not differ in terms of the type or frequency of these cues.

Action Component

The action component of an apology refers to the behavioural efforts of the apologizer both at the time of the apology and following the apology. Although many apology researchers and theorists refer to this component using different terms, it is often seen as the validating aspect of the apology because it allows for verbal statements to be reinforced through action (Lazare, 2004; Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004; Slocum, 2006; Zechmeister et al., 2004). Therefore, the action component represents an important aspect of apology. Examples of this component include payment as compensation for damages (Lazare, 2004), performing a thoughtful deed (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007), and agreeing to aid in the removal of the harmful consequences of the offence (Zechmeister et al., 2004) such as participating in counselling after committing a serious offence against an intimate partner (Slocum, 2006).

In terms of the influence of gender on the action component, some theorists and researchers argue that males are more likely to employ behavioural components due to their instrumental orientation (Gonzales et al., 1992; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Such a view assumes that males prefer to perform an action to address a conflict situation whereas females may prefer to use verbal strategies (Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005; Mulac et al., 2006). For instance, males may focus on actions such as buying gifts for partners after relationship problems, whereas females may prefer to focus on emotional expression.

Gender differences in this area are often deemed minor and unreliable by some gender theorists (Burleson, Kunkel, Samter, & Werking, 1996) however, some studies relating to apologies provide support for gender differences. Males have been found to offer more help in studies focusing on helping behaviour (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Crowley, 1986) In addition, Blackman and Stubbs (2001) found that males were more likely than females to help a confederate pick up his dropped papers after being induced to make contact with him.

In contrast, Bataineh and Bataineh (2005) found that females were more likely than males to include behavioural components when apologizing for imagined minor offences against a friend. Furthermore, Gonzales et al. (1990) also found that females were more likely to help clean up after spilling liquid into a confederate's bag. In the latter study, the status of the offender was also investigated. Interestingly, gender only influenced the apologetic behaviour of lower status participants; there were no differences between males and females in the high-status group. This finding highlights the fact that contextual factors may play a role in the influence of gender and this will be the focus of the next section.

Contextual Factors

Within psychology there is considerable debate over the examination of the influence of gender on behaviours (Stewart & McDermott, 2004). In relation to apology and associated areas, it has been argued by some researchers and theorists that gender exerts little influence in apologizing (Fraser, 1981). Those with this view argue that males and females are more similar than different (Goldsmith & Dun, 1997; Shibley-Hyde, 2005). According to this point of view, the context is more influential than gender in apologetic responses. However, researchers do not appear to dismiss the notion that gender may be influential. Rather it is noted that examination should

consider contextual factors that may mediate the influence of gender (Shibley-Hyde, 2006). Those who argue for a gender-in-context view (Bauer, Holmes, & Warren, 2006; Deaux & Major, 1987; Feldman-Barrett, Robin, Pietromonaco, & Eysell, 1998; Goldschmidt & Weller, 2000) assert that gender differences may exist, but are likely to differ according to the situation (Aries, 2006), and can be attenuated or enhanced by contextual factors (Shibley-Hyde, 2006). As such, differences in the situation in which an apology occurs, may partially account for the varying findings in gender and apology studies (Deaux & Major, 1987).

Because social interactions, including the offering of an apology, are complex there are many contextual factors that may play a role (Gonzales et al., 1990). However, the discussion of all contributing factors is beyond the scope of this review. Instead, the contextual factors discussed here exemplify those highlighted by apology researchers and theorists in the literature. These include the status of the recipient of the apology, the degree of face threat to the offender, and the type and closeness of the relationship.

Status of the Recipient of the Apology

As mentioned in the previous section, the status of the recipient of the apology may play a role in the influence of gender on apologizing (Gonzales et al., 1990), with status referring to the social power of an individual (Aries, 2006). Given that females have historically been regarded as lower in power than males (Tata, 1998), status and gender are often seen as intertwined factors. Studies have shown that those of lower status are more likely to apologize to higher status individuals, and furthermore, that lower status individuals are more likely to offer longer apologies with more diverse components (Gonzales et al., 1990; Hodgins et al., 1996).

It has been suggested that when males and females are of equal status to the apology recipient, gender differences are attenuated (Aries, 2006; Tata, 1998). For

instance, in the Gonzales et al. (1990) study mentioned previously, high status males and females did not differ in terms of offering to help. In contrast, when males and females were of lower status than the researcher, females were significantly more likely to engage in helping behaviour as part of the apology. This may suggest that the influence of gender is mediated by the status of the recipient of the apology, so that gender is more influential when greater differences in the level of status exist. Evidence from two apology studies based in the workplace support this (Tata, 1998, 2000). In these studies, differences between male and female apologetic responses, such as frequency and length of apologies, were less when participants held similar positions of status.

Degree of Face Threat to the Offender

The degree of face threat for an offence has been seen as an important contextual factor in the offering of an apology (Gonzales et al., 1992). Face refers to one's social identity or reputation (Hodgins et al., 1996), and researchers have conceived of the level of face threat as related to the level of responsibility for an offence (Hodgins et al., 2003). As such, the degree of face threat increases as the level of responsibility increases.

The degree of face threat has been seen to interact with gender in a study by Gonzales and colleagues (1992). Gender differences in apologizing were enhanced when the level of responsibility increased. Specifically, males were more likely to save their own face through denial of the offence as responsibility increased. Conversely, females were more likely to protect the face of the offended individual through an apology as responsibility increased. Importantly, females also increased the number of components in their apologies as responsibility increased. Similar results were also

reported by Hodgins and colleagues (1996) where females were more likely to apologize as responsibility increase and males were more likely to deny the offence.

Type and Closeness of Relationship

Males and females have been theorized to behave and communicate differently when in close relationships as compared to socially-distant encounters (Aries, 2006; Bauer et al., 2006). As Ohbuchi and colleagues (2004) say, different norms exist in close relationships, and it is possible that different gender norms also exist. As such, it has been suggested that gender differences in apologizing are attenuated as relationships increase in closeness. For instance, differences between males' and females' apologies have been minor in close romantic relationships (Bauer et al., 2006; Exline et al., 2007) and more substantial in socially-distant relationships. However, relationship type may also impact on this factor, as males have been found to apologize less to close male friends, as compared to close romantic partners (Holmes, 1989). Therefore, gender differences may be more a function of the relationship type (i.e., friendship as compared to romantic partner) as opposed to closeness.

Alternatively, as most romantic relationships have been studied as heterosexual relationships, the gender of the recipient of the apology may be of more importance. The gender of the interactant partner in a social exchange has been seen by researchers interested in gender differences in communication as a powerful mediating factor (Athenstaedt, Hass, & Schwab, 2004; Sprecher & Sedikides, 1993). It has been found that females and males may behave and communicate differently depending upon the gender of the other individual, with gender differences being higher in same-sex interactions than in mixed-sex interactions (Aries, 2006; Dindia & Allen, 1992).

In relation to apologies, males have been found to apologize more to females than to males (Holmes, 1989; Tata, 2000) and may be more likely to include

components that are typically associated with females, such as affect, when apologizing to females. Theorists such as Holmes and Bauer et al. (2006) posit that males may behave and communicate in more similar ways to females when engaging with a female. In contrast, when engaging with another male, males may be more likely to conform to gender-typical styles of communication and behaviour such as using less verbal communication, and using less affective components in speech (Sprecher & Sedikides, 1993).

Cultural Factors

Cultural factors have been identified as an important factor that may play a role in the influence of the gender on communication and social interaction (Di Mare & Waldron, 2006), and more specifically in the area of apologies (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008; Itoi et al., 1996; Tata, 2000). Although it is acknowledged that culture can be seen as a contextual factor, due to the importance to the topic (Di Mare & Waldron, 2006) cultural factors will be discussed as a separate section,

Culture has been defined in various ways; however a majority of the literature pertaining to apology refers to cultural factors in terms of nationality (Di Mare & Waldron, 2006). It has been suggested that apologies may have different meanings in different nations (Meyerhoff, 1997). For instance conceptions of apology may differ for collectivist cultures, such as Japan and Mexico, and individualist cultures such as the United States of America (USA) and Australia (Itoi et al., 1996; Sugimoto, 1997; Takaku, 2000). Therefore, apology findings, including those pertaining to in the influence of gender, are likely to differ according to the cultural context.

Influence of Culture on Gender

Theorists examining gender differences in communication and related areas have identified cultural factors as important mediating factors on the influence of gender (e.g. Aries, 2006; Di Mare & Waldron, 2006; Mortenson, 2002). Mortenson argues that focusing predominantly on one culture simplifies the effect of gender and may ignore the fact that gender roles can vary according to culture. For example, gender roles in patriarchal societies such as Japan (Itoi et al., 1996) and Jordan (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008) may differ from gender roles in societies where gender differentiation has decreased, such as the USA (Di Mare & Waldron, 2006).

Influence of Culture on Gender and Apology

As discussed above, cultural factors may play an important role in both apologies and in the gender roles prescribed for males and females. Several studies provide support for the notion that gender differences in apologizing may be mediated by cultural factors. Itoi and colleagues (1996) found that gender differences in frequency and type of apology were greater for Japanese participants than for American participants. Specifically, females were significantly more likely than males to offer an apology in the Japanese sample only. In contrast, there were no gender differences in the American sample. Differences in denying an offence were found in the opposite direction, with American males more likely to refuse any wrongdoing than American females. Japanese males and females rated the likelihood of refusal similarly.

Similarly, gender differences in the frequency of apologies were also found between American and Jordanian males and females (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008). However, this study also analyzed apology components and highlighted the fact that gender differences in components may be mediated by cultural context. For example, American and Jordanian males were less likely to include action and affect components

than American and Jordanian females. Culture played an important role in this study because gender differences were significantly greater in the Jordanian sample than in the American sample. The authors theorized that the increased differences in the Jordanian sample were due to differences in the cultural context, and the gender roles prescribed for males and females in different cultures.

Methodological Considerations

In addition to the contextual factors discussed above, mixed results for the influence of gender on apologizing may also be partially due to methodological issue. This section will discuss these limitations and the impact that these may have had on findings pertaining to the influence of gender.

Design

Hypothetical responses. Studies such as those by Hodgins et al. (1996), Hodgins and Liebskind (2003) and Gonzales et al. (1992) found that females apologized more, and furthermore, that females used more components in a more complex manner. Such studies ask participants to read vignettes, assume the role of the offender, and then account for their hypothetical actions. It is possible that this method is merely indicative of what the participant believes they would or should do. As a result, responses are possibly influenced by gender stereotypes (Lerner, 2006; Verhofstadt, Buyess, & Ickes, 2007) as participants may rely on typical schemas of behaviour, which may or may not be representative of actual behaviour (Feldman-Barrett et al., 1998).

Laboratory experiments. Laboratory experiments are typically seen as advantageous due to the ability to find causal relationships (Lerner, 2006) however, studies conducted in the laboratory may influence findings related to gender. Because of the ethical limitations associated with inducing offences against intimate others,

experiments (e.g., Blackman and Stubbs 2001; Gonzales et al., 1990) are necessarily limited. As a result, such studies typically measure offences against a stranger. Furthermore offences such as spilling water (Gonzales et al., 1990) or making bodily contact with another (Blackman & Stubbs, 2001) typically have minor consequences and are low in responsibility. This is problematic for several reasons.

Firstly, laboratory experiments are only indicative of apologetic responses after unintentional offences with minor consequences committed against a stranger. Therefore, more severe offences against close others such as friends or romantic partners are not accounted for by these methods. This is an important consideration given that contextual factors such as closeness of relationship (Bauer et al., 2006) and offence responsibility (Gonzales et al., 1992) have been found to impact on the influence of gender on apologizing. As a result, the presence or absence of gender differences in these studies is only informative for a very limited type of situation and may obscure important gender differences and similarities.

Secondly, laboratory experiments, such as the study by Blackman and Stubbs (2001), only allow for minimal contact between the individuals. As Lerner (2006) asserts, it is possible that such encounters do not allow gender differences in communication to be sufficiently explored. For example, gender differences in relatively brief encounters may be small; however, gender differences may be proportionate to the need for communication. Experiments that only examine brief encounters may not adequately explore gender differences in longer apologies that require more communication.

Samples

University student samples. Many of the studies examining the influence of gender on apologizing have been based on samples composed of university students

between the ages of 18-26 (e.g., Bataineh & Bataineh, 2005, 2008; Blackman & Stubbs, 2001; Gonzales et al., 1992; Gonzales et al., 1990; Hodgins & Liebskind, 2003; Hodgins et al., 1996; Schlenker & Darby, 1981). It is not clear whether gender exerts a similar influence across different ages, education levels, and socioeconomic status (MacGeorge, Feng, Butler, Dane, & Passalacqua, 2005). For instance, it is possible that gender roles change over time and may exert less influence as individuals grow older, especially in long-term relationships (Deaux & Major, 1987). Conversely, it is possible that gender roles become more ingrained as individuals grow older. Furthermore, it is also possible that increased education may heighten awareness of gender stereotypes and as a result may impact on the manner that individuals display gender typical behaviour.

Anglo-American samples. As discussed previously, researchers and theorists argue that both apologies and gender may differ in meaning according to culture (Tata, 2000) and furthermore, that gender differences are amplified in other non-American cultures (e.g. Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008; Itoi et al., 1996). Most studies investigating the influence of gender on apologizing have relied on samples of Anglo-American participants, with only a limited amount, such as the aforementioned studies of Bataineh and Bataineh and Itoi and colleagues, addressing this limitation. It is possible that if more culturally-diverse samples were used, gender differences may be either amplified or obscured (Aries, 2006). Similarly, it is also possible that different gender norms exist in other Western cultures such as Australia, which also have not been explored sufficiently.

Conclusion and Areas for Future Research

In sum, this review has discussed the major themes pertaining to the influence of gender on apologizing in the literature. Overall, it appears that findings in this area are

mixed. There does appear to be support for small gender differences in some areas of apologizing, namely the frequency of apologies, the quantity and complexity of components, as well as the content of some of the components such as affect (e.g., Gonzales et al. 1990). However, such results are limited to offences against a stranger where consequences and responsibility are minimal (Blackman & Stubbs, 2001; Gonzales et al., 1990) or are limited by methods which rely on what participants think they might do (Gonzales et al., 1992;; Hodgins and Liebskind, 2003; Hodgins et al., 1996).

Contextual factors, such as status (Gonzales et al., 1990), closeness and type of relationship (Exline et al., 2007; Holmes, 1989), and the degree of face threat to the offender (Gonzales et al., 1992) were also discussed as they are likely to attenuate or enhance the influence of gender. Therefore, the absence or presence of gender differences in the studies mentioned may depend on the specific context. In this way, contextual factors may also account for the mixed findings in this area. Specifically, gender differences were seen to be amplified in more patriarchal cultures (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008; Itoi et al., 1996), which provides support for the notion that the influence of gender may be partially dependent upon the cultural context.

As Hodgins et al. (1996) highlight, one of the few consistencies of apology research is that there are many important variables in the apology process. Researchers such as Stewart & McDermott (2004) and Cosgrove (2008) assert that exploratory studies using qualitative methods may be more suitable for ascertaining the influence of gender on complex situations and those that are not easily examined in experimental settings. Such studies may be more able to fully explore the subtle and yet important ways that gender differences may exist in apologetic responses, and the different contextual factors that may play a role in the influence of gender (Smith, 2008).

Therefore, future research could include qualitative studies that explore actual experiences of apologies from males and females. These may help address the elements lacking in the literature as more studies need to address the perceptions of the offended (Bennett & Earwalker, 1994; Hodgins et al., 1996). Such research would be of benefit in determining whether gender differences and similarities found within the limited contexts discussed in this review can be extrapolated to close relationships affected by more severe offences. Such information is more likely to be useful to clinicians, who may deal with more complex situations than those studied in the research thus far.

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Gender and Apologies: Exploring Offended Females' Perceptions of

Apologies from Males and Females

Stacey Bennet

Edith Cowan University

Abstract

Researchers are interested in apologies because of their association with relationship reconciliation after conflict. However Allan (2007) noted that a lack of theory on apology makes apology research problematic. Subsequently, Allan advocated the use of Slocum's (2006) theory of apology based on a grounded theory study. Following Slocum's suggestions for future research, the present study aimed to examine the role of gender in apologies in a similar context to Slocum's study, that is, for serious offences in close relationships. In doing so, the present study aimed to refine Slocum's theory. A review of the literature showed that prior research on gender and apologies might not be applicable to this context, and therefore, it was decided that exploratory research was necessary. The present interpretative phenomenological study used a sample of 12 females who had received apologies for serious offences from male and female romantic partners and friends. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken to explore how the respondents perceived the apologies they received and interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to analyze the data. Six themes emerged from the data. One cluster of themes was seen as common to the male and female apologies, one theme was seen as unique to female apologies, and one cluster of themes was seen as unique to male apologies. The themes were consistent with Slocum's (2006) theory of apology, but highlighted the complexity of apologies and the need to consider gender in theories of apology.

Author: Stacey Bennet

Supervisors: Dr. Dianne McKillop

Prof. Alfred Allan

Submitted: October 2008

Gender and Apologies: Exploring Offended Females' Perceptions of Apologies from Males and Females

The notion that close interpersonal relationships are important to the wellbeing of individuals is well established within psychology (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dyer, 2000; Hinde, 1979). Although close relationships can be a source of psychological comfort, they can also be a source of discomfort when conflict occurs (Hatfield, 1984; Tsang, McCullough, & Fincham, 2006). Given that conflict is inevitable in relationships (Dyer, 2000; Eaton, Struthers, Shomrony, & Santelli, 2007) remedial methods of repairing fractured relationships are of interest (Oswald, Clark, & Kelly, 2004; Tsang et al., 2006). Apologies have been associated with relationship reconciliation (Bono, McCullough, & Root, 2008; Takaku, 2001) and increased psychological (Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004) and physical (Anderson, Linden, & Habra, 2006) wellbeing after conflict. As a result, researchers (e.g., Allan, 2007) and theorists (e.g., Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008) have considered the construct of apology to be an important area of research.

However, because apologies are complex (Lazare, 2004) there are many factors that influence apologies and responses to them (Hodgins, Liebskind, & Schwartz, 1996). Therefore, it would appear important to develop a theory of apology. Noting the lack of such theory, Allan (2007) advocated the use of a theory developed by Slocum (2006). Using grounded theory method, Slocum's theory of apology was developed after examining 23 offended individuals' perceptions of apologies for serious offences from an intimate partner. According to Slocum's theory, apologies can be seen in terms of three core components, or elements, of the apology: affect (e.g., demonstration of emotion), affirmation (e.g., statements of admission) and action (e.g., removing the offence consequences through behaviour). These components are suggested to differ according to whether the apologizer focuses on the self (self-focused) or on both the apologizer and recipient (self-other focused).

Slocum (2006) suggested that the theory needed further development and outlined several directions for future research. The role of gender in apologies was identified because participants in the study raised the issue of gender differences in apologizing. In addition, other theorists have also advocated the need for further exploration of the role of gender in apologies (Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008).

A review of the literature suggests that past researchers have also been interested in gender and apologies. Such research has focused primarily on frequencies of apologies by males and females (Blackman & Stubbs, 2001; Gonzales et al., 1990; Hodgins & Liebskind, 2003; Hodgins et al., 1996; Holmes, 1989). The results of this body of research strongly suggest that females are more likely to include apologies after offences.

Researchers have also investigated the degree of effort exerted in apologizing by males and females, which has been defined as the number and complexity of components included in apologies (Gonzales, Manning, & Haugen, 1992; Tata, 1998, 2000). For example, an apology that includes three components is seen as more effortful than an apology that includes one component. The results of these studies suggest that females are more likely than males to offer longer and more complex apologies. For example, Gonzales and colleagues (1992) found that females offered apologies with more components than males when responding to a hypothetical offence scenario. In addition, the authors stated that the components in female apologies were more elaborate. For instance, females used more linguistic intensifiers such as 'so' and 'very' and also used more varied expressions when apologizing.

Other research has focused on differences in the actual content of components included in male and female apologies (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2005, 2008; Holmes, 1989). For example, Bataineh and Bataineh (2005) found that females were more likely than males to include statements of emotion when apologizing for hypothetical minor offences against friends in a sample of 100 students.

Overall, the literature on gender and apologies is limited in numerous ways.

Firstly, the research has focused entirely on the apologizer's point of view when examining the nature of male and female apologies, resulting in a lack of research on the subjective perceptions of apology recipients (Bennett & Earwaker, 1994; Hodgins et al., 1996). Because it is possible that males and females hold different expectations of apologies for each gender (Holmes, 1989; Michaud & Warner, 1997) and perceive apologies differently according to the gender of the interactant partner (Aries, 2006; Athenstaedt, Hass, & Schwab, 2004; Feldman-Barrett, Robin, Pietromonaco, Eysell, 1998; Sprecher & Sedikides, 1993) perceptions are important when considering gender and apologies. However, most research has failed to recognize that gender might affect apologies at the level of the recipient.

Secondly, prior research has been restricted by the use of quantitative methods such as laboratory experiments (e.g., Blackman & Stubbs, 2001; Gonzales et al., 1990). Laboratory experiments are necessarily limited by ethical considerations, and thus involve apologies in artificial contexts. Specifically, researchers commonly induce participants to believe they have committed offences such as bumping into a confederate of the researcher (Blackman & Stubbs, 2001) or spilling liquid into a researcher's bag (Gonzales et al., 1990). As a result, these studies investigated apologies for unintentional, minor offences. This is important because factors such as closeness of relationship (Bauer, Holmes, & Warren, 2006) and perceived responsibility (Gonzales et al., 1992) and severity (Holmes, 1989) for offences have been found to impact on the influence of gender on apologizing. Therefore, it is unlikely that findings from studies that examined artificial apologies for minor offences committed against a stranger would generalize to actual apologies for serious offences within close relationships.

Other studies have examined apologies within close relationships (e.g., Hodgins et al., 1996; Hodgins & Liebskind, 2003; Gonzales et al., 1992). However these have relied on hypothetical scenarios to elicit participants' responses. Bradley, Curry, and

Devers (2007) argue that such methods are not useful for eliciting rich information about complex situations such as apologies after actual interpersonal conflict. Specifically, it is possible that hypothetical responses are merely indicative of what respondents believe they should do rather than a product of actual behaviour (Lerner, 2006). In terms of gender, participants' responses to hypothetical scenarios might access heuristic cognitive processing that is more likely than responses to actual conflict to be influenced by gender stereotypes (Feldman-Barrett et al., 1998; Lerner, 2006; Verhofstadt, Buyess, & Ickes, 2007).

Due to the aforementioned limitations, it would appear that past research on gender and apologies cannot be generalized to apologies for serious offences in close relationships. The lack of research on this specific context indicates that research should be exploratory at this stage. The present study aimed to follow Slocum's (2006) suggestion for the further investigation of gender and apologies for serious offences in close relationships. In doing so, the present study was seen as an opportunity to refine Slocum's theory based on the argument that theories developed using grounded theory can be refined through the comparison of data from other contexts (Glaser, 1978; Wuest et al., 2006).

Given the complexity of the interaction of gender and apology, this study was seen as one part of a larger program of research that would address how gender influences apologies. Therefore, the specific aim of the present study was to explore offended females' perceptions of male and female apologies for serious offences within close relationships. Close relationships were defined as interpersonal relationships that are voluntary, interdependent, and committed (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006; Tsang et al., 2006). Specifically, the present study defined close relationships in a similar way to past research (e.g., Cupach & Carlson, 2002; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachel, 1997; Ohbuchi et al., 2004; Perlman, 2007; Samp & Solomon, 1998) as romantic partnerships and close friendships.

Methodology

Research Design

Although questions about gender in psychology have traditionally been investigated within a positivist paradigm using quantitative methods, it is possible that such methods minimize the complexities of the situation. Given that apologies are complex (Lazare, 2004) and the current research is exploratory, a qualitative research design was used (Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2005). Specifically, the present study utilized an interpretative phenomenological approach which adhered to hermeneutic principles of research (Conroy, 2003). An interpretative phenomenological approach is particularly suitable for answering questions concerning perceptions of complex, personal experiences that can be seen as processes rather than singular events, including those that are in the early stages of research (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

Consistent with Smith and Osborn's (2003) suggestion, an interpretative approach was appropriate given that the researcher was seeking to interpret the respondents' perceptions, who were simultaneously interpreting the offered apology. The approach recognizes the central role of the researcher in interpreting the experiences of the phenomenon being explored (Hein & Austin, 2005). Thus, following Finlay's (2008) suggestion, the researcher recognized that one can not be fully detached from prior experiences. In this way, the researcher aimed to work with the respondent to co-construct the understanding of the perceptions together (Pontoretto, 2006) through semi-structured interviews as advocated by Smith and Osborn (2003).

Sample

Interpretative phenomenological studies typically use small samples that are broadly homogenous (Brocki & Wearden, 2006) and comprise laypersons whose experiences most authentically illustrate the area under investigation (Wertz, 2005). In

the present study, the aim was to explore perceptions of apologies from males and females. Therefore the researcher aimed to recruit equal numbers of respondents who had received apologies from each gender. Twelve offended females, aged between 21 and 55, who had received at least one apology for serious offences from close friends or romantic partners (8 females and 10 males) aged between 21 and 58 were recruited using purposive sampling methods (see Tables A1 and A2 in Appendix A for sample characteristics). The researcher aimed to recruit respondents of various ages as it has been suggested that age might influence the role of gender in communication (MacGeorge, Feng, Butler, Dane, & Passalacqua, 2005).

Specifically, the researcher used criterion sampling (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005) to find respondents who met the research criteria. Screening questions were asked of prospective respondents to ensure the sample was broadly homogenous in terms of relationship closeness and offence severity.

In addition, snowball sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to identify respondents, which involved the researcher distributing research details to acquaintances and colleagues who could refer suitable respondents (see Appendix B). The snowballing method was especially used to locate females who had received apologies from females because more respondents who volunteered had received apologies from males than females. Furthermore, the researcher also placed details of the study in a community newspaper distributed throughout the Perth metropolitan area (see Appendix B) and advertised on gay and lesbian community websites to locate females who had received apologies from females in romantic relationships.

Data Collection

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data, which are suggested as the most effective method of data collection for interpretative phenomenological studies (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The interviews were constructed to

be open ended and to operate as informal conversations with a purpose (Morrow, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2005). Such interviews were considered to be the preferred method to gain access to respondents' perceptions of apologies that involved personal and complex details. The development of rapport was considered important from the beginning of the researcher-respondent relationship in order to move past surface answers and thus gain more thorough access to experiences (Osborn, 1994; Polkinghorne, 2005). The researcher recognized the interviews as social interactions where the researcher influences the data collected and the influence her characteristics could have on the responses of respondents (Potter & Hepburn, 2005).

The researcher, a 28 year old female, conducted all 12 interviews between June 2008 and August 2008. Interviews were held at quiet cafés convenient to the respondent and were approximately one hour in length. At each interview the researcher gave respondents an information letter (see Appendix C) and followed Potter and Hepburn's (2005) advice by explicitly naming the aim of the project. However, the researcher recognized that this might shape the respondents' responses, and therefore was careful not to emphasize the gender aspect of the research.

The respondents signed consent forms and were asked to provide background information such as their age, the age and gender of the apologizer, and when the offence occurred (see Appendix D). This information was deemed important contextual information that may affect the interpretation. Also, in order to determine perceived relationship closeness and offence severity, respondents completed Likert scales. These scales were guided by those used by Slocum (2006) to further ensure that the sample was homogenous in relation to these areas (see Appendix D).

A brief interview schedule that was guided by Slocum's (2006) research was used (see Appendix E) however, the researcher followed Osborn's (1994) suggestion and allowed for a flexible structure. The interviews began with broad questions to establish the context of the apology and to ease respondents into discussing personal

details of the apology (Haverkamp, 2005). The main question asked respondents to describe the apology in as much detail as possible. Throughout the interview, the researcher aimed to adopt a constantly questioning attitude while actively listening to respondents' responses for avenues of further questions (Conroy, 2003). The researcher aimed to ask short questions and allow for silences (Kvale, 2006) to elicit thick descriptions (Pontoretto, 2006).

As advised by Bailey (2008) all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher immediately after the interview, as transcription can be regarded as the beginning of data analysis. This allowed the researcher to record any thoughts or ideas that arose. Such thoughts were incorporated into the following interviews if deemed important, making the data collection and analysis stages iterative (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Dey, 1993; Ezzy, 2002).

Establishing Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest four main constructs that need to be addressed to maintain the trustworthiness, or rigor, in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The reflexivity of the researcher, which refers to the researcher being aware of her own biases and assumptions (Finlay, 2008), is seen as important to all of these constructs (Morrow, 2005; Whitehead, 2004). To aid in reflexivity, the researcher kept a reflective journal which outlined her pre-judgments prior to data collection (Brocki & Wearden, 2006), as well as her reflections during the interview stage and analysis stages (Morrow, 2005; Silverstein et al., 2006). Through the use of the journal, the researcher aimed to question the way her pre-judgments might contribute to the data collection and analysis (Finlay, 2008). Given the gender specific nature of the research and the fact that the researcher was female, the journal was considered especially important to the present study.

To further safeguard credibility, the researcher used peer debriefing which involved discussing her thoughts and reactions to the interviews and analysis with a peer who provided alternative explanations (Kidd, 2002). Additionally, to ensure that the study was dependable, the researcher kept an audit trail, which provided a detailed record of research processes and activities (Whitehead, 2004). Examples included in the audit trail include memos which contained observations and reactions made throughout the research process (Kidd, 2002). The audit trail also contributed to the confirmability of the research, which is concerned with the fit between the data and the findings.

Ethical Considerations

Respondents were reassured that they could withdraw from the study at any stage and were not obligated to discuss any issues that caused discomfort. In addition, due to the personal nature of the research topic and to ensure respondent wellbeing (Haverkamp, 2005), the respondents were provided with a list of free counselling services. Identifying information was deleted by assigning pseudonyms to all respondents and any individuals they mentioned to ensure confidentiality.

Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith & Osborn, 2003) was used to analyze the data. Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006) note that IPA aims to provide an interpretation of the experience positioned in a wider theoretical context. Because the aim was to interpret the respondents' perceptions and refine Slocum's (2006) theory of apology, the analysis process was guided by Slocum's theory. However, care was taken to ensure any new information not accounted for by the theory was allowed to emerge from the data. In this way, the analysis was recursive in that it was both inductive and deductive, which is typical of IPA (Brocki & Wearden, 2006;

Gilgun, 2005; Silverstein et al., 2006) and allows researchers using it to endorse, challenge or modify existing theory (Eatough & Smith, 2006).

Although IPA is a non-prescriptive approach to analysis, several researchers such as Eatough and Smith (2006) and Smith and Osborn (2003) provide an approach to analysis which was adopted for this study. Specifically, after transcription, each interview was read several times to allow for immersion in the data. The left hand margin was used to note emerging codes, and salient words were highlighted. The right margin was used to transform the initial codes into more specific themes. The researcher then clustered similar preliminary themes together on the basis of gender. To determine common and unique themes, the researcher devised a guide based on frequency counts that classified themes as weak, moderate, or strong for each gender. Frequency counts for each theme were undertaken in order to guard against bias in reporting the analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morrow, 2005). In order to be a common theme, the theme had to be present in over 60% of the accounts for both genders, while unique themes had to be present in over 70% of accounts for one gender, but not be present in more than 40% of the accounts of the other gender.

Findings and Interpretations

Common Themes for Male and Female Apologies

Three themes were identified to be common for perceptions of male and female apologies and included: communication of affect; actions as validation; and, gateway to discussion. These three themes are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Common male and female themes

Theme	Definition	Exemplars
Communication of affect	Displaying emotions such as grief, sadness, and guilt through nonverbal cues e.g., crying, submissive body language, altered tone of voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Yes I could see that he was suffering</i> ▪ <i>You could see it... his expression was that of pain</i> ▪ <i>Tearful and that sort of thing which just makes the whole body language very submissive</i>
Actions as validation	The undertaking of behaviours during and after the apology that validated the affective and verbal elements of the apology e.g., agreeing to attend counselling, performing thoughtful deeds, giving meaningful gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The main way that he eventually apologized was that he made me something... it was a symbol of how sorry he was</i> ▪ <i>I think one of the things is that she was determined that we go to counseling so it was something that she really wanted to fix</i>
Gateway to discussion	Being open to conversation including explanation of the offence and discussion of the impact on the relationship in addition to listening to the recipient's point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>I did need to go over it quite a bit... he explained it at length...lots of talking</i> ▪ <i>So it was really the most important part... like a gateway to explaining everything that had been going on</i>

Communication of affect.

This theme involved the apologizer communicating emotion when apologizing to the respondent. The communication of emotion is an area that apology theorists and researchers have posited to be a central aspect of apology (Bennett & Earwaker, 1994; Hareli & Eiskovitz, 2006; Lazare, 2004; McCullough et al., 1997; Schmitt et al., 2004) and is a core component of Slocum's (2006) theory. The participants in this study confirmed the importance of affect, in that the communication of emotion was highlighted by respondents as a salient feature regardless of the apologizer's gender. Specifically, 90% and 75% of male and female apologizers respectively, were perceived to communicate emotions such as grief, guilt, and sadness. Because of the similarity of the descriptions to Slocum's theory, the theme was labeled accordingly as 'affect'.

The respondents discussed their perceptions of emotion in terms of nonverbal gestures rather than through verbal expression. Examples of the nonverbal gestures

include crying, lowering the head, and as Alicia said, through a general “*debilitated*” body posture, which can be seen in this description:

Physically, it really destroyed him for a period of time. He was tearful, he was meek, it actually came out over a three day period, so by the time it came to d-day he was pretty worn down, physically a bit of a wreck... I could see that.
(Lily)

This finding is congruent with the results of past apology research which have highlighted the importance of nonverbal cues in apologies (Anderson et al., 2006) and supports Slocum’s (2006) assertion that the affect component of apologies is often demonstrated rather than verbally expressed. Several respondents, such as Jilly, mentioned being able to “*see*” the distress when looking at the other person. The fact that males and females were perceived to communicate emotions in similar manners is incongruent with findings from past studies by Bataineh and Bataineh (2005, 2008) that suggested that males are less likely than females to include affect components in their apologies. A possible explanation for the discrepancy of results is that Bataineh and Bataineh measured affect in apologies through verbal statements, whereas respondents in the present study focused their attention on nonverbal aspects.

However, the fact that males and females were perceived to show emotion in similar ways is congruent with results from a study by Gonzales and colleagues (1990). This is the only study that has measured nonverbal cues in apologies and found no differences in nonverbal cues employed by males and females. In addition, findings from the present study regarding affect are consistent with the suggestion of past researchers (Feldman-Barrett et al., 1998; MacGeorge et al., 2005) that males and females demonstrate similar levels of emotion in close relationships as compared to distant relationships.

Actions as validation.

This theme encapsulated the behavioural component of the apologies offered to the respondents and was perceived by 70% and 60% of respondents who received apologies from male and females, respectively. These behaviours included offering gifts, removing or addressing the offence consequences through behaviours such as agreeing to counselling and refraining from committing the offence again, as well as performing thoughtful deeds for the respondent. These perceived behaviours are congruent with the core component of action in Slocum's (2006) theory of apology; hence this theme was labeled using the same terminology.

Other researchers have also suggested that apologies require actions to validate the affective and verbal elements of apologies (e.g., Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004; Scher & Darley, 1997; Zechmeister et al., 2004). The respondents' perceptions were consistent with results of prior research (Slocum, 2006; Zechmeister et al., 2004) as actions were seen as essential components to apologies. For some respondents, actions were perceived to be the most important component. For example, Kirsty, whose friend had prevented her from completing an important academic project, recounted how she had not been sure that she had been offered an apology until the apologizer presented her with the material the respondent needed for her project. In doing so, the apologizer had removed the harm caused through initially taking the material from Kirsty, as she described in this comment: *afterwards she called a guy she barely knew from her old work that she knew and somehow got me some of this veneer and so I guess that was a good indication that she was sorry.*

Indeed, several participants perceived apologies to be lacking when actions were not incorporated into the apology. For example, Jilly perceived the apology she received from her husband as “meaningless” and as “just lip service”, as shown by this remark:

(His) actions didn't change well enough. I suppose if post-apology the actions had really changed then I would've believed it... I suppose if you reflect on

apology you really need something to be tangible or something to change to show that it was quite genuine and that things will be different. (Jilly)

In terms of gender and actions, past research on apologies has found mixed results. For example, Gonzales et al. (1990) found that females were more likely than males to help after an offence but Blackman and Stubbs (2001) found the reverse in another experimental study. The fact that males and females both used similar types of actions in this study, points toward the central aspect of action in apologies for both genders after serious offences in close relationships.

Gateway to discussion.

Many of the respondents, 60% and 63% of recipients of male and female apologies respectively, perceived the apologizer to use the apology as an opportunity to discuss the offence. As Kirsty mentioned, the apology was used as a “*gateway*” to explanation which increased understanding of the offence and why it happened. This aspect of the apology was important because the “*need to go over it*” (*Nina*) was common to all respondents. The perception of apology as an opportunity for discussion is congruent with the views of past researchers (Slocum, 2006) and theorists (Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008) who have suggested that explanation of the offence is important for recipients of apologies, especially after offences for which the apologizer is perceived to be highly responsible (Bennett & Earwaker, 1994).

The use of apology to engage in discussion was perceived to be a salient feature of both male and female apologies by the respondents. This finding is consistent with the results of Holmes’ (1989) ethnographic study which showed males and females to both include explanation when apologizing. However, gender theorists have suggested that talking and repeatedly discussing issues in relationships is typically associated with females (Bauer et al., 2006; Dindia & Allen, 1992; Goldshmidt & Weller, 2000). Indeed, the respondents in the current study perceived the apologizers to be more open

to discussion in this specific context than in other contexts (e.g., with a colleague, male friend). The respondents suggested that because the relationships were so close, and as Lily mentioned, the males were “*so fearful*” of losing the relationship, they were more willing to engage in discussion. The fact that discussion was a salient feature of both male and female apologies supports the assertions of some gender theorists who have suggested that the context determines how males and females differ in terms of communication (e.g., Shibley-Hyde, 2006). It is possible that perceived severity of the offence closeness of the relationships, and gender of the interactant partner were influential in the degree of discussion.

Unique Female Apology Themes

Only one theme was found to be unique to respondents’ perceptions of female apologies. As outlined in Table 2, this theme is the initiation of apology.

Table 2

Unique Female Themes

Theme	Definition	Exemplar
Initiation of apology	Offering spontaneous apology, without being coerced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>She was the first one to offer the olive branch...</i> ▪ <i>She rang to apologize to tell me that’s what she’d done and realized that I was quite excited incorrectly and she felt bad</i>

Initiation of apology.

This theme refers to respondents perceiving apologies to be offered spontaneously. It was found to be unique to female apologizers, as every female apologizer ($n = 8$, 100%) was perceived to initiate the apology process rather than needing to be coerced to apologize. Similar to results of a study by Risen and Gilovich

(2007), the respondents perceived the initiation to be important because it suggested that the apologizer cared about the respondent and the relationship by “*offering the olive branch*” (Leila). The finding that females initiated apologies is consistent with prior research that has found females to offer apologies spontaneously (Gonzales et al., 1990; Hodgins & Liebskind, 2003; Hodgins, et al., 1996; Holmes, 1989).

In contrast to the females, a small number of male apologizers ($n = 4$, 40%) initiated the apology, with the remaining males being confronted by the respondents. The respondents who had to confront the apologizer felt that they would not have received an apology if the apologizer had not been coerced. These coerced apologies can be characterized as “*not coming easily*” (Lily). Lily elaborated further and described her husband’s apology as needing to be “*ripped out by an outside force*”, which reinforces the perceived difficulty experienced by males in the initial stages of apologizing. Furthermore, the difficulty in apologizing was aggravated by the males having initially denied the offence, which was perceived to increase the severity of the initial offence:

Because it wasn’t the cheating that I was necessarily upset about....it was because I asked him to his face and said “here is your opportunity” and he lied to my face and so that was the principle that hurt me the most. (Lottie)

The finding that some males used denial instead of apologizing spontaneously is consistent with empirical research that has suggested that males are more likely than females to deny offences (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2005, 2008; Gonzales et al., 1992). However, when comparing male and female apologies in the present study, it is notable that the males who denied the offence were all confronted about infidelity. Given that past research by Gonzales et al. (1992) found that males were more likely to deny offences that were higher in perceived degree of severity and responsibility, it is possible that this finding in the present study is related to offence type. Infidelity might be considered to impact more on close relationships than other offences (Bachman &

Guerrero, 2006; Feeney, 2004) thus resulting in denial to minimize conflict. As no females committed infidelity, it is not known whether the present finding is related to gender or offence type.

Unique Male Apology Themes

Two themes, sustained and high level of effort and adoption of self-other focus were found to be unique to perceptions of male apologies, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Unique Themes and Descriptions for Male Apologies

Theme	Definition	Exemplars
Sustained and high level of effort	Apology as a process showing high level of effort which persists over a long period of time. Effort evidenced through ongoing discussions, actions, and repeated communication of affect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>That he put a lot of effort in and went to a lot of trouble to do that for me... not a one off it was prolonged more like....2 or 3 months</i> ▪ <i>It was the combination of hearing him sincerely apologize, not once, not twice, but over a long period of time.... Because we were doing counselling weekly and going over things...</i>
Adoption of self-other focus	Conveying that the apologizer understands the impact of the offence consequences on the recipient of the apology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>I feel like it was for my benefit and not release for him... and he could really see and feel the pain that I was going through.... that was the biggest part of the apology I think....thinking of my needs as well</i> ▪ <i>It isn't saying sorry it is the meaning behind it all....you can say sorry all you bloody like but it doesn't go anywhere unless there is a real understanding behind it</i>

Sustained and high level of effort.

Many of the respondents (n = 8, 80%) who received male apologies perceived the apology to be an enduring process that persisted over an extended period of time. During that period, the apologizers were perceived to exert a high level of effort. Specifically, effort was perceived through the interaction of elements from the prior themes. For example, the respondents highlighted the effort used in ongoing

discussions, in which the male apologizers were actively involved, and in consistently undertaking the actions previously discussed, as opposed to singular actions or discussions, as exemplified by this description:

I think full and total effort...and at no time did he tire of my need to go over it... and that would've been extremely trying...the sorry happened in many, many forms...physical actions, weekends away, counselling for five years so in the end it was a long, long process. (Alicia)

The finding that apologies in close relationships were perceived as processes, rather than singular events, is consistent with past theory (Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008) and research (Slocum, 2006). However, the finding that sustained and high effort was associated more with males than females is inconsistent with findings from prior research that has addressed gender and effort in apologizing (e.g., Gonzales et al., 1990; Hodgins et al., 2003). These researchers have found that females are more likely to exert effort, as evidenced by the use of more components in apologies. In contrast, only a small number of respondents in this study ($n = 3$, 37%) perceived female apologizers to exert a high level of effort in apologizing. Instead, the female apologizers were perceived as preferring to “*just move on*” (Felicity). Females were perceived to apologize using similar components to males (e.g., affect, action) but these were characterized as singular events rather than sustained over a period of time. As Felicity noted, it was as though the apologizers just wanted the recipients to “*get over it*” which was perceived as a lack of effort by the respondents.

Adoption of self-other focus.

Many of the respondents ($n = 8$, 80%) who had received apologies from males perceived the apology as demonstrating genuine understanding for the offence consequences, and how these impacted on the respondent and their relationship. Given that this theme was similar to the focus aspect of Slocum's (2006) theory, it was labeled

accordingly. According to Slocum's theory, the focus of the apology is conceived as a continuum between self-focus and self-other focus. A self-focused apology is perceived by the recipient as primarily beneficial for the apologizer as it considers only their needs. In contrast, a self-other focused apology is perceived as beneficial for both the recipient and the apologizer as it considers the needs of both parties.

The respondents' perceptions of the apologies they received support this aspect of Slocum's (2006) model. The respondents clearly perceived the male apologizers to demonstrate a self-other focus. The respondents generally perceived the apologizers to have understood the offence consequences through showing that they were primarily thinking of the respondent's needs rather than their own, as seen in Lily's description of this theme:

I feel like it was for my benefit and not release for him...and he could really see and feel the pain that I was going through...that was the biggest part of the apology I think...thinking of my needs as well. (Lily)

Interestingly, this feature was absent from most of the respondents' perceptions of female apologies, with only a minority ($n = 2$, 25%) perceiving the apologizer to have demonstrated the adoption of a self-other focus. This finding is in contrast to the general perceptions of the participants in Slocum's study who suggested that females were more likely to understand the hurt inflicted on the recipient of an apology. The point of view of the participants in Slocum's study is supported by research that has suggested that females are more interpersonally sensitive, thus more likely to demonstrate an understanding of the hurt inflicted on another individual (Hareli & Eiskovitz, 2006). Instead, the respondents in the current study perceived many of the female apologies to lack demonstration of the understanding of the needs of the respondents, as seen in this description: *so her apology was just like "get over it, don't worry about it" and didn't acknowledge my feelings...no understanding of how it hurt me (Lottie)*

Some of the respondents who had received a female apology characterized the apologies they received in terms of partial understanding, where the apologies failed to convey that they really understood what they had done, as described by this Felicity:

It isn't saying sorry it is the meaning behind it all...you can say sorry all you bloody like but it doesn't go anywhere unless there is a real understanding behind it... she said she understood but I didn't feel she did.

Some of the respondents remarked that the apologies appeared to contain all of the “*ingredients*” of apologies, but instead were perceived as being “*manipulative*”, “*measured*”, and “*scripted*” (Jacinta). In terms of Slocum’s (2006) theory, these apologies can be seen to be perceived as self-focused.

Some researchers have suggested that females are socialized to remedy social conflict situations (Blackman & Stubbs, 2001; Gonzales et al., 1990; Holmes, 1989) and some evidence suggests that females prefer to resolve conflict (El-Sheik, Buckhalt, & Reiter, 2000). This is related to several of the respondents’ perceptions that females often use apologies meaninglessly, and specifically, that the female who apologized to them apologized out of social desirability rather than concern for the respondent. As Emma and Jacinta noted respectively, their friends seemed to apologize “*because that is what good people do*” and as a result of wishing to be not “*seen to do the wrong thing*”. Given that such apologies have been theorized to be perceived as insincere (Lazare, 2004; Risen & Gilovich, 2007) this would appear to be important.

Conclusions

The present study explored offended females’ perceptions of apologies from males and females in order to gain a better understanding of the role gender might play in apologies. In doing so, it aimed to refine the theory of apology devised by Slocum (2006), following Slocum’s suggestion that the theory needed further exploration in regards to gender. As such, the present study was a necessary initial stage in an

envisioned larger body of research which would investigate gender and apologies.

Therefore, at this stage conclusions are limited.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study are consistent with Slocum's (2006) theory of apology. Many of the same core components that emerged from the present data such as affect, action, explanation through discussion, and the adoption of a self-other focus were also central aspects of apologies according to Slocum's theory. Although, there were similarities, the findings suggest that females may perceive male and female apologies in different ways. In terms of theoretical implications, this suggests that present theories, such as Slocum's, and future theories of apology may need to take gender differences into account.

In addition, there were inconsistencies between the results of past research (e.g., Bataineh & Bataineh, 2005, 2008) that were limited to minor offences in distant relationships and the findings in this study. Therefore, the findings in the present study indicate that exploratory research is necessary at this stage of investigating gender and apologies for serious offences in close relationships. Given the inconsistencies, the present findings suggest that the context of apologies may influence the role of gender and therefore provide support for the importance of attention to context when examining gender (Aries, 2006; Feldman-Barrett et al., 1998; Goldshmidt & Weller, 2000; MacGeorge et al., 2005; Shibley-Hyde, 2006). The importance of context also has implications for refining present, and developing future theories, as theorists should recognize the theories as context-bound.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the present study has found inconsistencies from past research, methodological issues might provide an explanation. For instance, although the sample was homogenous in terms of relationship closeness, the respondents of the present study did differ in several ways according to the relationship with the apologizer. Although

every effort was made to recruit respondents with similar relationship types, there was a lack of females who had received apologies from females in romantic relationships. Specifically, a majority of the respondents ($n = 8$, 80%) who received male apologies had been in a romantic relationships with the apologizer. In contrast, a majority of the respondents ($n = 5$, 63%) who received female apologies had been in close friendships with the apologizer, with only 37% of such respondents in romantic relationships with the apologizer. Although all respondents rated their relationships with the apologizer as very close, both verbally and as rated on a Likert scale, it is possible that the differences between romantic relationships and friendships (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006) might affect perceptions of apologies in several ways.

Firstly, the function of the apology might have differed according to the relationship context, in that there might be increased motivation to reconcile romantic, especially marital, relationships as compared to friendships. For example, some of the respondents who received male apologies had been married for many years at the time of the offence. Furthermore, their lives were highly interconnected with the apologizer in terms of children, finances, and living arrangements. Conversely, the respondents who received female apologies had been friends for shorter periods, and were not interconnected in the same ways. Therefore, the apologizers in marital relationships might have appeared to make more effort and demonstrated a more self-other focus because they were more motivated to reconcile than the apologizers in friendships, which are easier to terminate.

Secondly, many of the respondents ($n = 6$, 60%) who were recipients of male apologies had reconciled with the apologizer, while many of the respondents ($n = 5$, 63%) who received female apologies had terminated the relationships. Due to the retrospective nature of the data collection, it is possible that the state of the relationship at the time of the interview biased the recalled perception of the apology. For instance,

the respondents in reconciled relationships might have perceived apologies in more favourable terms than those who were in terminated relationships.

Similarly, given that the respondents perceived the apology to persist over a long period of time, the apologizers in reconciled relationships might have more opportunity and time to apologize than those who were in terminated relationships. For instance, the apologizers who were in terminated relationships might not have been afforded the same opportunities to apologize. This would have especially affect the themes of high and sustained effort and adoption of self-other focus. Since males and female apologizers did differ in this area, it is possible that this explains the difference, rather than the gender of the apologizer.

Therefore, given the fact that the present study cannot ascertain whether the findings were affected by relationship characteristics, future research should endeavour to examine romantic relationships and friendships independently to more fully understand the role of gender in apologies. Furthermore, given the exploratory nature and limited scope of the current study, it is difficult to draw conclusions about gender and apologies as this study only examined apologies from the perspective of females. It is necessary for future researchers to examine apologies from the perspective of males using a similar exploratory study. Following which, future researchers could create a quantitative instrument to determine gender differences in perceptions of apologies in a larger population.

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Appendix A

Sample Characteristics

Table A1

Characteristics of Respondents who Received Male Apologies

Respondent	Age of Apologizer	Relationship	Offence
Jean	52	Romantic (Marital)	Infidelity
Alicia	34	Romantic (Marital)	Infidelity
Lily	39	Romantic (Marital)	Infidelity
Lottie	20	Romantic (De Facto)	Infidelity
Emma	60	Romantic (De Facto)	Insensitive behaviour e.g., failed to defend her against rumours and hurtful remarks started by his sister (her close friend)
Jacinta	24	Romantic (Marital)	Continual hurtful behaviour e.g., lied about using intravenous drugs, stole belongings
Jilly	40	Romantic (Marital)	Unsupportive behaviour that led to the breakdown of the marriage
Felicity	47	Romantic (Marital)	Unsupportive behaviour that led to the breakdown of the marriage
Nina	29	Friendship	Insensitive behaviour after a sexual encounter resulting in abortion
Casey	50	Friendship	Betrayal of confidence that jeopardized respondent's professional reputation

Table A2

Characteristics of Respondents who Received Female Apologies

Respondent	Age of Apologizer	Relationship	Offence
Felicity	30	Romantic (De Facto)	Continued insensitive behaviour e.g., accusing respondent of being jealous of her success, flirting with other women
Leila	31	Romantic (De Facto)	Unsupportive behaviour while respondent went through challenging circumstances; actions that led to end of relationship
Casey	36	Romantic (De Facto)	Failed to fulfill a promise and ended the relationship
Jacinta	24	Friendship	Insensitive behaviour e.g., lying, covering up for her respondent's boyfriend and helping him steal from her and helping him use drugs
Emma	70	Friendship	Started rumours and made hurtful remarks against her
Lottie	45	Friendship	Continued inappropriate advances towards respondent's partner
Kirsty	21	Friendship	Betrayal of trust that jeopardized respondent's academic grades; continued unsupportive behaviour
Alicia	43	Friendship	Betrayal of trust that jeopardized respondent's academic grades; insensitive behavior

Appendix B

Examples of Respondent Recruitment Methods

Have you ever been apologized to by a romantic partner or very close friend?



My name is Stacey Bennet and I am a Psychology Honours student at Edith Cowan University. I am looking for female participants who have been offered an apology from male or female romantic partners and very close friends for my research project on apologies. The offence should be something that you perceived as serious.

I would need approximately 30 minutes of your time for a confidential interview in which we would discuss the apology and your perceptions of it.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated and will help further psychological research on this important aspect of human relationships.

Please call or email me for more information

0431 835 796
sbennet3@student.ecu.edu.au
staceybennet7@yahoo.com.au

The project has received clearance from the ethics sub-committee of the Faculty of Computing, Health and Science of Edith Cowan University.

THE LISTENING POST

Has someone ever said 'sorry' to you?

"I'm sorry" are two powerful words – and Stacey Bennet is setting out to discover why.

Apologies and how they are delivered is the focus of research by Stacey, a psychology honours student.

She is looking for more women volunteers to interview.

She said: "The general aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of the ways people apologise in intimate relationships."

Due to the limited scope of her project, she can interview women only.

"I am specifically looking for females who have received apologies from males and females in intimate relationships," she said.

"I am especially looking for females who have been apologised to by females, as it has been harder for me to locate these cases."

"I would need about 30 to 45 minutes to conduct an audio recorded interview, in which we would discuss how the person apologised."

Stacey said all interviews were confidential.

She said research on apologies might have important implications

for counsellors and for general conflict resolution between people who were close.

Anyone interested in volunteering for an interview can call Stacey on 0431 835 796 or email sbennet@student.ecu.edu.au.

The project has approval from the ethics committee of the faculty of computing, health and science of Edith Cowan University.

Stacey said: "I have completed several interviews but would like to add to my findings."

"The aim is to see whether males and females may differ in the way they apologise."

"The present status of the relationship is not important. They may or may not be still in the relationship."

"This research is important as apologies have been seen as important in the path to forgiveness, which interests clinical psychologists."

Pure August bliss

There's a western suburbs resident who, every four years, packs a suitcase with a pile of good books, some light clothes and heads for the airport.

She did it again earlier this month; her destination – a remote South Pacific island.

There she sits, sipping cocktails and happily reading for three weeks, avoiding any possible exposure to the Olympic Games.

Appendix C

Information Letter to Participants



My name is Stacey Bennet and I am conducting a psychology research project as part of my Honours degree at Edith Cowan University. The aim of the study is to investigate how women perceive apologies. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of apologies in interpersonal relationships, especially in the area of forgiveness and relationship restoration. The project has been approved by the ethics sub-committee of the Faculty of Computing, Health and Science and is supervised by Dr Dianne McKillop and Professor Alfred Allan, of the School of Psychology and Social Science.

I would like to invite women who have been apologized to, by either a man or a woman with whom they were in a close relationship with at the time, to participate in this project. Participation would require an interview of approximately 30 to 60 minutes, either at Edith Cowan University or at a public meeting place convenient to you, such as a local library. The interview will be audio recorded. During the interview, I will ask you questions about the offence, the relationship you had with the person, and specifically, how the person apologized to you. Any other issues that you feel are important could also be discussed as it is your experience that is of interest in this research. You may also be asked to verify any information that I am uncertain of following the interview to ensure correct interpretation. This would only be a brief exchange via telephone or email.

Any information you provide will be strictly confidential. Neither your name nor any identifiable information will be used in any report on this research, however non-identifiable data from this research may be published. You would also be under no obligation to discuss anything that you do not wish to, and would be able to withdraw from the project at any stage.

If you would like to participate or to receive more information, please contact me on 0431 835 796 or 9382 3017, or email me at sbennet3@student.ecu.edu.au. You can also contact my supervisors Dr Dianne McKillop on 6304 5736 or Prof. Alfred Allan on 6304 5536. If you wish to speak to someone independent of this research, please contact Dr Justine Dandy on 6304 5105 or j.dandy@ecu.edu.au. Thank you very much for your time.

Stacey Bennet

List of Counselling Services

Lifeline	(08) 13 1114
Crisis Care	(08) 9223 1111
Samaritans	(08) 9381 5555

Appendix D

Participant Consent Form and Background Information



Gender and Apologies: Exploring Offended Females' Perceptions of
Apologies from Males and Females

I _____ (the participant) have been given an information letter which I have read and understood.

I have been the opportunity to ask questions about the project and have been given satisfactory answers, and know that I can contact the researcher with any additional questions.

I understand that participation will involve being interviewed about an instance when I was offered an apology.

I understand that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that I may be asked to verify information I provide after the interview.

I understand that the information I provide is confidential and that my identity will be not disclosed at any stage of the project.

I understand that only the researcher will know the names of the participants.

I understand that information I provide will only be used for the purpose of this project, the results of which may be published with no identifiable data.

I understand that I am free to withdraw at any stage without explanation or penalty.

I spontaneously agree to participate in this project.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Background Information

Offended Participant

First name: _____ *Age:* _____

Offending Partner/Friend

Age: _____ *Sex:* M F

How long ago did the offence happen?

How long was your relationship with the person prior to the offence?

Using a 0-10 scale, where 0 = not close at all and 10 = extremely close, how close did you feel to the person before the offence?

Using a 0-10 scale, where 0 = not close at all and 10 = extremely close, how close did you feel to the person immediately after the offence?

Using a 0-10 scale, where 0 = not at all hurt and 10 = extremely hurt, how hurt or distressed were you at the time of the offence?

Using a 0-10 scale, where 0 = not at all serious and 10 = extremely serious, how serious was the person's offence, in terms of the extent that it violated a rule, standard or principle?

Appendix E

Interview Schedule

Note. • Questions denote possible probes rather than definite questions.

1) Can you tell me a bit about your relationship with the person before the offence, in terms of closeness and satisfaction with the relationship?

2) Can you tell me what it was that person did that upset or offended you?

3) Can you describe what the person said or did that you perceived to be an apology?

- How would you describe the body language of the person?
- How remorseful did you feel that the person was? In what way did they show you this?
- How did the person behave or act during and after the apology?
- What were the main aspects of this apology in your opinion?

4) Have you been apologized to by a male/female in a close relationship as well? Can you discuss your perceptions of that apology?

5) What was the most important point about the apology/ies that you would like me to take away today?

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY is devoted to the application of theory and research from social psychology toward the better understanding of human adaptation and adjustment, including both the alleviation of psychological problems and distress (e.g., psychopathology) and the enhancement of psychological well-being among the psychologically healthy. Topics of interest include (but are not limited to) traditionally defined psychopathology (e.g., depression), common emotional and behavioral problems in living (e.g., conflicts in close relationships), the enhancement of subjective well-being, and the processes of psychological change in everyday life (e.g., self-regulation) and professional settings (e.g., psychotherapy and counseling). Articles reporting the results of theory-driven empirical research are given priority, but theoretical articles, review articles, clinical case studies, and essays on professional issues are also welcome. Articles describing the development of new scales (personality or otherwise) or the revision of existing scales are not appropriate for this journal.

All submissions must be made electronically (preferably in MSWord format) to Thomas E. Joiner at joiner@psy.fsu.edu. Electronic submissions should include all figures and tables in the article file itself, not as separately attached files. Only original articles will be considered. Articles should not exceed 10,000 words (text and references). Exceptions may be made for reports of multiple studies.

Instructions for paper submissions: Paper submissions will be accepted upon request if electronic submission is not possible. All submissions must be double-spaced, on one side of standard 8 1/2" x 11" white paper. Four copies should be submitted; each must be clearly legible, have all pages numbered, and contain all figures and tables.

Authors desiring an anonymous review should request this in the submission letter. In such cases identifying information about the authors and their affiliations should appear only on a cover page.

Tables should be numbered and referred to by number in the text. Each table is to be typed on a separate sheet of paper.

List **references** alphabetically at the end of the paper and refer to them in the text by name and year in parentheses.

Authors may consult the publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition (2002), for rules on format and style. All research papers submitted to the JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY must conform to the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association. Articles should be written in nonsexist language.

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